

Status of U.N. Post, and Nominee, in Doubt

By BERNARD WEINRAUB

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, March 25 — A conflict between Secretary of State George P. Shultz and Lieut. Gen. Vernon A. Walters has raised doubts about whether the general, newly appointed as American delegate to the United Nations, will accept the post, Administration officials said today.

Although Larry Speakes, the White House spokesman, said President Reagan valued General Walters's "expertise and in-depth knowledge of foreign policy," Administration officials made it plain that Mr. Reagan agreed with Mr. Shultz's opposition to making him a member of the White House National Security Council. The departing United Nations delegate, Jeane J. Kirkpatrick, is on the council.

Mr. Reagan nominated General Walters, an experienced diplomatic troubleshooter and former Central Intelligence Agency official, on Feb. 8 to succeed Dr. Kirkpatrick. At the time, General Walters said he would hold Cabinet rank, and indicated that he would serve on the National Security Council.

But in recent days, Administration officials said, General Walters has been told he will not be on the security council, which is the ranking branch of the Government in foreign policy decision-making. A report in The Washington Times today said General Walters felt "betrayed" by Mr. Shultz on the precise role he would play.

Edward P. Djerejian, a State Department spokesman, said he was authorized by General Walters to deny that he had ever accused Mr. Shultz of lying to him.

Other State Department and Administration officials said Mr. Shultz fought against giving General Walters a seat on the National Security Council.

"It has nothing to do with Walters, but with that job," said one State Department official. "Shultz did not want the U.N. Ambassador to have the same degree of independence that Jeane Kirkpatrick had."

Mr. Shultz and Dr. Kirkpatrick have tangled over foreign policy issues during her tenure at the United Nations, and Mr. Shultz is known to be concerned that the Administration has not spoken with one foreign policy voice with Dr. Kirkpatrick on the security council.

In gaining Cabinet status, Administration officials indicated, General Walters felt that he would automatically take a seat on the council. But in recent days he was told that such status did not automatically follow as a result of holding Cabinet rank.

General Walters said through an aide that he would not comment on the reported dispute with Shultz.

One State Department official said: "It's not just having a seat on the N.S.C. It's the hobnobbing. It's the sense that you're one of the senior foreign policy people. In essence, what Walters is being told is he's not going to make policy."

Mr. Speakes said Mr. Reagan "will proceed" with General Walters's nomination, which needs Senate approval. Mr. Speakes said "there wasn't any diplomat or person in the diplomatic service with the expertise and understanding and in-depth knowledge of foreign policy" possessed by General Walters.

An Administration official who spoke on the condition that he not be identified said Mr. Reagan would seek Mr. Walters's advice both in National Security Council meetings and elsewhere. He "will call on General Walters either in that forum or any other forum for his advice," the official said, adding that the retired three-star Army general "will not be a person who attends every N.S.C. meeting."

For the last 30 years, it has been a common practice to give Cabinet rank to chief American delegates to the United Nations who were politically prominent. In recent years, some chief delegates have also been invited to regularly attend the security council meetings.

One State Department official said Dr. Kirkpatrick was "given carte blanche, she was notified of every N.S.C. meeting and had the right to attend every one of them."

The official added: "That obviously won't happen with Walters."

Mr. Speakes, asked if Mr. Reagan was seeking to downgrade the United Nations job, replied, "Absolutely not."

Administration officials said General Walters had spoken privately over the weekend with Dr. Kirkpatrick about his role as her replacement. No details of the conversation were disclosed.

Mr. Speakes said General Walters had talked to White House officials over the weekend, and that he "did not give us any indication to believe he would not accept it."

When his nomination to head the United Nations delegations was announced, General Walters, who is 68 years old, said he considered it to be the pinnacle of his long career.